

## CELTIC

On quite a number of occasions, we have mentioned in these pages the various members of the Mackay family, of Hamilton, Ontario. Frequent mention of the Mackays is not in the slightest way unusual, because their shipping interests were very extensive and spanned considerably more than a half-century. Indeed, the Mackays probably could be considered the most influential Canadian shipping entrepreneurs ever to ply their trade on Lake Ontario, which always was the centre of their activities.

The patriarch of the Mackay family was Aeneas D. Mackay, Sr., who was born in 1825 at Golspie, in County Sutherland, Scotland, and later emigrated to Canada. He married Elizabeth Hughes in 1852, and this union produced three sons, Robert Osborne Mackay, Aeneas Donald Mackay and Adam Brown Mackay. Like their father, Robert and Adam were to become very heavily involved in the lake shipping business, and they were aged 24 and 11, respectively, when their father died on May 14, 1877.

Aeneas Mackay, Sr., was instrumental in forming the Lake and River Steamship Company, of Hamilton. Adam Hope was president of this concern, while John Harvey was secretary-treasurer and Aeneas Mackay was manager. On Aeneas Mackay's death, R. O. Mackay succeeded to the position in the firm which his father had held.

Aeneas (Senior) also was a principal in the Merchants Line consortium, which also included Capt. John Balmer Fairgrieve, of Hamilton, G. E. Jaques & Company, of Montreal, and James Norris, Sylvester Neelon and Capt. P. Larkin, all of St. Catharines. The Merchants Line provided daily steamer service between Montreal and Chicago, and also a similar service between St. Lawrence River ports and those of Lake Ontario, which route later was extended as far as Cleveland, Ohio. During the 1870s, there were approximately 25 vessels in the Merchants Line fleet, all of which were owned individually and were chartered to the line.

By the 1890s, the Merchants Line was operated by the Mackay brothers, Robert and Adam, in association with Capt. Fairgrieve, still of Hamilton, Jaques & Company, of Montreal, and W. A. Geddes, of Toronto.

The shipping interests of R. O. and A. B. Mackay were greatly expanded in the early years of the new century. Although R. O. Mackay retired from the shipping scene about 1908, A. B. Mackay was still connected with certain lake shipping interests as late as the 1920s, although by that time he was a resident of the Isle of Wight, off the English coast. These latter activities of the Mackays do not have any relevance to the ship which we have chosen to feature here, and so we will not attempt to enlarge upon them at this time.

More to the point is the fact that on Tuesday, May 6th, 1874, at 3:25 p.m., Miss Eugenie Owen Mackay christened the newly-built combination passenger and freight propellor CELTIC at Archibald M. Robertson's shipyard on the waterfront at Hamilton, Ontario. After her launch, the new steamer was taken in tow by the steamer CORINTHIAN, and she was moved around to Mackay's Wharf, Hamilton, for fitting out.

CELTIC was enrolled at Hamilton, and she was to carry Canadian official number 71151. Constructed to the order of Aeneas D. Mackay at a cost of \$48,000.00, she was designed with what in those years were full "canal-size" dimensions, being the maximum that the smallest of the old Welland and St. Lawrence canals then could accommodate. She was 131.0 feet in length (and we believe this to have been measured between perpendiculars rather than overall), 26.0 feet in the beam, and she had a depth of 14.7 feet. Her tonnage was calculated as 698 Gross and 440 Net, although the 1874 listing of the Association of Canadian Lake Underwriters showed her tonnage as 399, based on a survey reportedly done in February of 1874. However, as the ship was far from complete at that time, we believe that we can discount the C.L.U.